To Noah Longanecker.

BY J. B. LAIR.

I believe it ought to be and is the object of every Christian to learn the truth, and indeed I cannot conceive how we can be saved without a fair comprehension of the truth. In order to do this we must of necessity be careful how we interpret the scriptures. There is no safe way to do but to interpret the scripture by the scripture, and if we only have access to the "authorized version," we may then be misled. This makes me think of what Hugh Broughton, a celebrated Hebraist and contemporary of James the first, said of the authorized version of the scriptures, viz. "James I. of England, who consented to the murder of his mother, Mary Queen of Scotts, was a very poor authorizer of a version of the scripture, and indeed the translation was done so poorly that I would rather be rent in pieces by wild horses than to help bring such a translation before the public."

In my investigation I find that this man's assertion is not very "far off." For instance, N. Longanecker's Art. in No. 12, p. 179, G. M. is a fair specimen of what may be deduced from the scriptures as they are generally understood, and more especially when they suit us to make a certain point. I refer to the article on "Satan—His Origin and character." I do not care to notice anything in the article unless it be the word "terrible" in the first paragraph—which I may refer to hereafter—until I come to the writer's reference to the "great red dragon" in Rev. 12: 3. It is a little strange and somewhat diverting to see that scripture referred to to prove the "personal existence" of a devil. This proves nothing of the kind and has no reference to such a being whatever; it has direct reference to certain secular powers of earth. And yet the writer says that "the wonderful wisdom as well as the poisonous and destructive character of this (personal) monster spirit of evil is here clearly portrayed." Such a misapplication of the scripture does not "clearly portray" anything to me. But I am not particular to notice anything more until we come down to this assertion: "The Bible teaches that Satan was once an angel of light and holiness, created by God himself." Until the scriptures are produced that prove this assertion, I shall deny. I do not believe that the scriptures teach anything of the kind, and if they do not, it is wrong to parade such assertions before the public. I shall await the proof of such an allegation from some one. A like assertion that "the Bible represents Satan as a fallen angel" is equally absurd. But then it is proven by the sweeping assertion made by Christ in Luke 10: 18, viz. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Now if this proves what the writer intends it shall, and Satan just fell from heaven when the ten were out preaching, I would like to ask, who was the devil during all these hundreds of years before this?

Other references, such as 2 Peter 2: 4 and Jude 6 are misapplied. If the writer will study well the scriptures, he will easily comprehend that these references to "angels" do not mean the heavenly angels, but the references are direct to men.

I ask you again, is anybody so taken with mythology, Pagan teaching, superstition or childish fables, as to think that the devil has a tail? If it is parabolic—the tail I mean—may not the whole paragraph be? Certainly it is figurative language and has no reference whatever to the devil, his tail or the angels.

I pass other assertions that are equally absurd as those already noticed, and come to the assertion that "he trusted to equal the Most High." This reference in Isaiah has reference to Nebuchadnezzar and not to the devil, hence the writer loses another point. Now I pass on to notice the closing remarks.

First, "Satan is a monster spirit of evil." If I believed as the writer does, I too would believe as the Pagans do, "that Satan was a rival creator." But I believe neither, and I shall proceed to set forth a few facts that I believe every reasonable person will accept. Satan is not a powerful being of himself. He never did and never will do anything of himself. All that he ever accomplished is through man; he has power only through the free agency of man; without man the devil can accomplish nothing. The Bible does not teach as some believe—that God loans the devil his power, nor do I believe it for that reason. The devil has just as much power as he had influence over man, and he cannot and never did endow man with any supernatural power.

Take for instance the regenerated man—the man over whom the devil has no power, and what will the devil accomplish with that man. Nothing. Now put every person in the world in that condition and how "powerful" would the devil be? He would be the embodiment of weakness.

Second, he was cast out of heaven on account of his rebellion." This assertion is not proven by the scriptures, nor can it be, nor shall I believe it until it is proven. But why will men make such remarks without the proof.

Third, "Pride was the cause of his rebellion." I might believe this if I chose to do so, but I shall await the proof also. It is plain now why all these sweeping and unproven assertions are made—to try to persuade the unwary to believe that pride is the only besetting sin that would require the attention of the church. This same kind of teaching would persuade people to believe as some teach, that pride originated in heaven. What blindness—a little short of blasphemy—to think that pride, the great sin(?) originated in heaven, where God is, heaven the embodiment of perfection, purity and holiness, and yet the fountain of sin. What a contradiction. Have you not learned that the Bible teaches that a fountain cannot bring forth both bitter water and sweet. If we have no higher ideas of God and heaven than to think that both good and sin come from them, 2 Cor. 6: 14, 16 ought to settle the matter for us even, without common sense.

In closing I would yet remark, pride is wrong, like any other wrong thing, but I cannot conceive how it can be any worse than to parade so many gross perversions before the public, just for the sake of alarming people of the dire consequences of pride and scaring them into submitting to certain forms of dress, thinking thereby to escape the subtle influence of this "great monster spirit of evil," and the consequences of this great sin—pride.

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The Adjusting Power of Holiness.

The faith through which holiness is imparted by the Holy Spirit, and by which it is retained and matured, accepts unhesitatingly all the statements of inspired truth. That "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord" is, therefore, no mere theory with holy people, but a great substantial fact to be realized. Holy persons accept as true, and find it demonstrated in actual experience, that all crosses, all losses, and all reverses of every kind, are blessings in disguise, and accept them as such from God's gracious hands. Thus they are free from chafing and fretting, whatever may be the character of the dispensations which make up the Divine dealings with them. Hence, they "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." The ability to do this is called, in this article, the adjusting power of holiness.

I. Holiness Adjusts its Possessor to Prosperity. In view of man's terribly perverted moral nature, there is no condition so perilous to the soul as prosperity in business, in health, and in social position. But few persons pass through such dispensations of any length, and keep themselves unspotted from the world; and then only such as are truly devoted to God, and kept by the power of grace. Holy people feel that their wealth is not their own, but God's, and therefore must not be used to indulge self in gratifying a love for money, or in fostering any other loss. They feel that it must be used as God directs, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to build churches, to endow colleges, and to carry on the benevolent enterprises of Christianity. And to these uses do all well-informed holy persons appropriate their income not needed in carrying on their business, and in supporting their families, and other dependents.

Observations substantially the same may be made concerning the blessing of health, which gives roundness to the form, beauty to the complexion, vigor to the muscles, and energy to all the appetites and physical functions, and which prepares for the greatest happiness and usefulness. But the greatest part of those who enjoy these blessings use them to gratify pride and vanity, or in mere feats of activity and strength, without any noble aim, or, worse still, to gratify the animal nature, by indulging in mere sensual pleasures. Holiness forbids all this, and leads its votaries to a higher and purer use of these Divinely bestowed gifts. Holy people are led by the force of an internal spiritual life, to view their bodies as the temples of the Holy Ghost, and they cannot, therefore, live merely to eat, and to drink, and to dress; but they eat, and drink, and dress, to support and care for these temples, and keep them in order the Master's use. They administer to the appetites and senses, and use the muscular forces, not for mere sensual enjoyment alone, but chiefly for merciful and benevolent ends. They live for God.

II. Holiness Adjusts its Possessor to Adversity. The loss of money, of health and of friends, fall with crushing weight upon sinners and feeble Christians; but wholly sanctified persons, while they feel as keenly as others the loss, can cheerfully say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

If riches take to themselves wings and flee away, and they can no longer use this talent, they proceed to use their poverty. They feel that they have no more right to use their poverty to excite and foster envy towards the rich, or to gratify a disposition to murmur and pine, or to stimulate and nourish any other perverse disposition, than they had to use riches to nurse pride, or administer to the animal appetites. They feel that they should be always filled with the Spirit, and wear sunny faces and happy countenances in their poverty and toil, and thus show the power of grace to make them contented and happy in their reverses.

Similar statements must be made with regard to the loss of health and loss of friends. As health must not be used to pamper lust, so sickness must not be used to feed dispositions that are wrong. And as friendships must not be turned to the aggrandizement of self, so friendlessness must not be allowed to awaken and cherish malanthropy or hate towards men. But, on the contrary, as poverty must be used to display the power of grace, and develop personal holiness, so may sickness be used in the same way; and friendlessness to lead to "One who sticketh closer than a brother." What a perversion, therefore, of these dispensations, when they are allowed to lead their subjects to murmuring and sourness, thus rendering themselves miserable and disagreeable to all around them. Holiness so adjusts to these reverses that they are cheerfully accepted, and used for the glory of God in disciplining self and saving others. —REV. SHERIDAN BAKER, D. D., IN HIDDEN MANNA.

Why Johnnie Liked the Minister.

"Oh, wasn't that a good minister we had today?" said Johnny.

"Yes, very good. Which sermon did you like best?" said the mother.

"Oh, I don't know. It wasn't the sermons altogether that I mean."

"What then?"

"Why, he prayed for Sunday Schools and boys so good; I never heard any one pray so much for boys. Most of them do not. That is why I liked him."

"Do you like to be prayed for?"

"Why yes, of course I do."

"The minister prayed today that all the boys might be Christ's boys. Did you like that?

"Yes, and I prayed as hard as I could that I might be. When we hear people praying for us it makes us think it is about time to be praying for ourselves. If children don't like to say much about good things, I guess they all like to have the minister remember them. I always watch and see if they pray for young folks; if they don't I think they won't have much in the sermon either. Then, of course, I don't listen as well as I should if I thought there was something for me."—Sel.